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SECOND ASIA-PACIFIC INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING ON HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUTH, HELD AT BANGKOK FROM 1 TO 5 JUNE 1998

Note by the Secretariat

The Conference secretariat has the honour to circulate to Conference partipants, as received and in the language of submission only, the attached Asia-Pacific Position for the Lisbon World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, as adopted at the Second Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on Human Resources Development for Youth, held at Bangkok from 1 to 5 June.

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Asia-Pacific Position for the Lisbon World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth

The Asia-Pacific Position for the Lisbon World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth was adopted by the Second Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on Human Resources Development for Youth, convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, from 1 to 5 June 1998 in Bangkok, as a regional preparatory activity for the Lisbon World Conference. The Meeting was co-sponsored by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The Asia-Pacific Position is derived from the draft Lisbon Declaration resulting from the Second International Consultations in preparation for the Lisbon World Conference.

The changes proposed to the original draft Lisbon Declaration are indicated in brackets by paragraph numbers. New additions suggested for incorporation in the draft Lisbon Declaration are also indicated in brackets.

United Nations
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Asia-Pacific Position for the Lisbon World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth

We, the Governments participating in the Second Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on Human Resources Development for Youth, convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, from 1 to 5 June 1998 in Bangkok,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 50/81 of 14 December 1995, in which the Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which called for regional conferences for youth affairs to be convened under the aegis of the United Nations,

Recalling also ESCAP resolution 50/7 of 13 April 1994, adopting the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region, as revised in 1994, in which youth are identified as a priority target group for human resources development programmes,

Recalling further ESCAP resolution 52/4 of 24 April 1996, in which the Commission called upon members and associate member governments to promote human resources development among youth in Asia and the Pacific by integrating the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and its ten priority areas, namely, education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure time activities, girls and young women, and full and participation of youth in the life of society and decision making, into their national youth policies, plans and programmes,

Recalling further the Declaration and Agenda for Action adopted at the first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Stockholm, August 1996), which was endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its 52nd session in November 1997, as well as ESCAP resolution 53/4 of 30 April 1997, in which the Commission called upon member and associate member governments to act towards the elimination of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in Asia and the Pacific,

Acknowledging the United Nations definition of youth as the age cohort of 15 to 24 years, as indicated in the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000,

2 *Considering* that 60 per cent of the world youth population or over 600 million youth reside in the Asian and Pacific region,

Noting with concern the situation of youth in Asia and the Pacific, the majority of whom live in poverty, as well as the special difficulties experienced by different groups of young people, such as those involved or affected by substance abuse, violence, neglect, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, conflicts, armed or otherwise; refugees and other migrant young people; displaced and parentless young people; young people living with disabilities; indigenous youth; young offenders; and other disadvantaged and marginalized young people,

Recognizing that youth are a positive force in society, and a human resource with enormous potential for contributing to development and the advancement of societies,

Welcoming the convening of the First World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, to be hosted by the Government of Portugal in cooperation with the United Nations, in Lisbon from 8 to 12 August 1998,

We, therefore, adopt the Asia-Pacific Position for the Lisbon World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and commit ourselves to:

National youth policies *(paras. 1 to 5 of the draft Lisbon Declaration)*

1. Ensuring that national youth policy formulation and implementation processes are accorded commitment from the highest political levels, including the provision of adequate levels of resources; *(new paragraph)*

2. Developing integrated national youth policies and action plans to implement the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY), thus improving the quality of life of young men and young women for their own development and their active participation in society; *(para. 1, revised)*

3. Formulating the necessary policies and programmes of both an intersectoral and multi-sectoral nature by the year 2000, as recommended by WPAY, while taking into account national priorities, realities and limitations arising from different economic, social and cultural development contexts; *(para. 2, revised)*

4. Reviewing the situation of youth and their needs and incorporating young people's own assessment of priorities; *(new paragraph)*

5. Ensuring that young men and young women actively contribute to the formulation, implementation and evaluation of national youth policies and action plans; *(new paragraph)*

6. Strengthening responsible partnerships among all key stakeholders including young women and young men, their families, governments, international agencies, youth organizations and other NGOs, educational institutions, civil society, the business sector and media in

order to create synergies to better address youth potentials and problems both at national and local levels; *(paras. 3 and 4, merged and revised)*

7. Developing measurable, time-bound strategic plans of action and indicators to create a common basis for national and regional evaluation of the implementation of national youth policies and action plans; *(para. 5, revised)*

8. Ensuring the mainstreaming of youth policy into national development policies and initiatives; *(new paragraph)*

9. Supporting regional and international exchange of best practices in youth policy formulation, implementation and evaluation, and the provision of appropriate development tools and technical assistance. *(new paragraph)*

Participation *(paras. 6 to 9 of the draft Lisbon Declaration)*

10. Enabling active participation of youth in the life of society and in decision making processes through the improvement and/or creation of conducive mechanisms and ensuring that the necessary gender-sensitive measures are taken to attain equal access and participation by young women and young men; *(para 6, revised)*

11. Developing the capacity of young people through the empowerment of formal and informal coalitions and networks of youth; *(new paragraph)*

12. Upholding and reinforcing policies that encourage independent and democratic forms of youth organizations and support freedom of association and expression to ensure the full contribution of youth to society; *(para 7, revised)*

13. Undertaking special efforts to reach young people with special concerns and provide them with the means and the motivation to contribute effectively in their societies, including young people living with disabilities, young refugees, displaced and parentless youth, indigenous youth, juvenile delinquents, street youth, young people suffering from HIV/AIDS, homelessness and joblessness, and other disadvantaged and marginalized youth; *(paras. 8 and 9, merged and revised)*

14. Creating structures and supporting experiences which enhance leadership development skills and opportunities for young men and young women; *(new paragraph)*

15. Enhancing the role of youth organizations in the planning, implementation and evaluation of national development plans and programmes; *(new paragraph)*

16. Advocating the need for the implementation of statutory requirements to ensure participation of young men and young women in decision-making mechanisms and processes, especially in those affecting youth policies and programmes; *(new paragraph)*

17. Encouraging youth volunteerism as an important form of youth participation; *(new paragraph)*

18. Promoting the development of a youth participation index and national and international mechanisms for its periodic evaluation. *(new paragraph)*

Development *(paras. 10 to 13 of the draft Lisbon Declaration)*

19. Investing in human resources development for youth to ensure their active participation in local, national and international development for their own benefit and that of society; *(para. 11, revised)*

20. Ensuring actions focusing on the alleviation of poverty, which is important for all development initiatives for youth; *(new paragraph)*

21. Ensuring gender-sensitive development which includes a focus on both increasing young women's participation as well as integrating gender concerns into youth development initiatives; *(new paragraph)*

22. Ensuring access for young women and young men to economic resources including land, credit, technologies and information as a necessary condition for relevant and effective national development; *(para. 10, revised)*

23. Enhancing the opportunities and development resources of young people living within rural and remote communities; *(new paragraph)*

24. Responding to the fundamental needs of young people for safe, healthy and secure living conditions, including shelter and freedom from fear of physical and psychological abuse in the family, school system and work place; *(para. 12, revised)*

25. Fostering awareness and commitment among young people to sustainable development principles and practices, especially in regard to environmental protection and supporting the actions of young people in promoting those principles; *(para. 13, revised)*

26. Encouraging bilateral, regional and international cooperation to create an enabling environment at the national and international levels in order to ensure the full participation of young people in economic and social development. *(new paragraph)*

Peace *(para. 14 of the draft Lisbon Declaration)*

27. Ensuring that young men and young women live within an environment free from threat, conflict, violence and exploitation, including violence in all forms of media; *(new paragraph)*

28. Strengthening the involvement of youth and youth organizations in peace-building, disarmament and conflict resolution; *(part of para. 14, revised)*

29. Enhancing the role of youth and youth organizations in the promotion of intercultural learning, tolerance, human rights education and democracy in order to promote mutual understanding and respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, responsibility, solidarity and international cooperation; *(part of para. 14, revised)*

30. Preventing the participation, involvement and mobilization of adolescents in armed conflict and other hostilities. *(new paragraph)*

Education *(paras. 15 to 23 of the draft Lisbon Declaration)*

31. Promoting education in all its aspects, namely formal, non-formal and life-long education, for the total development of youth as individuals and members of society, for the improvement of youth skills, and to prepare unskilled and out-of-school youth for employment; *(para. 15, revised)*

32. Guaranteeing access and continuity of all young women and men to good quality basic education, including family life education and the promotion of healthy life styles; *(para. 16, revised)*

33. Setting national time-bound goals for the expansion of access to, and improvement of, the quality of secondary and higher education; *(para. 17, revised)*

34. Offering adequate training in use of different forms of media to maximize their optimal impact on youth; *(para. 18, revised)*

35. Providing for the rehabilitation and reintegration of young people from juvenile detention and corrections into schools and training institutes; *(para. 19, revised)*

36. Designing new strategies focusing on youth in distress and violent circumstances, aimed at ending exclusion, offering renewed learning opportunities for early school leavers and promoting continuous learning and training opportunities for both employed and unemployed youth; *(para. 20, revised)*

37. Supporting family structures, especially those of the poor, and providing the necessary support measures to family and schools dealing with young people, particularly those living with physical and mental disabilities; *(para. 21, revised)*

38. Reinforcing and designing new partnerships to enable young people to learn, create and express themselves through cultural, physical and sports activities for the benefit of their balanced physical, intellectual, artistic, moral, emotional and spiritual development, as well as their social integration; *(para. 22, revised)*

39. Allocating resources to vocational education and training in response to economic, social and entrepreneurial realities; *(para. 23, revised)*

40. Ensuring the linkage and matching of education with the needs of industry, business and the employment market, wherever possible; and setting up extension services and other internship schemes, such as career education orientation, information dissemination programmes and networking, to enable young people to enter employment, as well as to create employment opportunities to meet the requirements of social, economic and technical changes; *(new paragraph)*

41. Involving all stakeholders of the educational process, including NGOs and the private sector, in the review of educational curricula in secondary education to ensure continued relevance for the great majority of school leavers; *(new paragraph)*

42. Emphasizing curriculum design and pedagogical approaches for earlier stages of education to lay the foundation for citizenship, competence and capability of young people to learn themselves; *(new paragraph)*

43. Including current issues such as reproductive health and substance abuse prevention in school curriculum design, as well as in extra-curricular activities; *(new paragraph)*

44. Encouraging youth participation in community work as an important part of the education system. *(new paragraph)*

Employment *(paras. 24 to 28 of the draft Lisbon Declaration)*

45. Promoting research on youth unemployment, market trends and demands and employment opportunities for formulating youth employment policies and programmes; *(new paragraph)*

46. Affirming the ultimate goal of full employment in rural and urban areas to ensure that opportunities for income-generating work are available to all youth, especially disadvantaged and marginalized youth; *(para. 24, revised)*

47. Promoting gender-sensitive policies and measures to empower young women as equal partners with young men in all fields of employment, including the technical, managerial and entrepreneurial fields; *(new paragraph)*

48. Enforcing equal employment and training opportunities for young people, regardless of ethnic and geographic origins, linguistic differences, gender, disability, political belief, creed or religion, and social, cultural and economic background; *(para. 25, revised)*

49. Promoting policies and measures for strengthening complementarity and partnership between public authorities, private sector industries and businesses, education and training institutions, financial institutions, extension service agencies, in conjunction with civil society initiatives for the promotion of youth employment; *(para. 26, revised)*

50. Investing in skills, vocational and entrepreneurial training of young people, together with an ethical orientation, and providing them with the

necessary technical, financial and marketing support to establish their own enterprises and businesses; *(para. 27, revised)*

51. Promoting employment-oriented education and training, in recognition of the current divergence of education and changing market needs; *(new paragraph)*

52. Promoting the development of mechanisms for career counseling to youth through educational and training institutions as well as the community; *(new paragraph)*

53. Fighting exploitation in the form of child labour and protecting minors against all extreme forms of child labour according to the ILO definition; *(para. 28, revised)*

54. Promoting greater national and international commitment to protecting human rights, meeting social protection needs and preventing exploitation of migrant youth labour; *(new paragraph)*

55. Ensuring greater bilateral and multilateral assistance to developing countries for the promotion of youth employment. *(new paragraph)*

Health *(paras. 29 to 35 of the draft Lisbon Declaration)*

56. Creating the political, legal, material and socio-cultural conditions which allow access to basic health care with adequate youth-friendly and gender-equitable services and paying particular attention to information and prevention programmes with special emphasis on major health problems affecting young people such as adolescent pregnancy, substance abuse, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, STDs, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition and mental disorders; *(para. 29, revised)*

57. Promoting the health of young people, preventing and treating health problems and providing rehabilitation and care by establishing effective partnerships within and between countries, local government bodies, non-governmental organizations, communities and youth themselves; *(paras. 30 and 31, merged and revised)*

58. Formulating policies and establishing programmes for the prevention of disabilities and for community-based rehabilitation and reintegration of young people with acquired disabilities; *(para. 32, revised)*

59. Formulating policies favorable to the development of health programmes, including safe water supply, sanitation, and waste disposal, in rural and poor urban areas, taking into account the specific needs of young women and men for a healthy environment; *(para. 33, revised)*

60. Recognizing the importance of sexual and reproductive health care, of disseminating information and of youth-friendly and gender-equitable services, in order to ensure physical, mental and social well-being of young people as well as access to safe, effective, affordable and

acceptable legal methods of family planning of their choice; *(para. 34, revised)*

61. Intensifying efforts and actions towards international cooperation concerning health and humanitarian action under emergencies and other situations; *(para. 35, revised)*

62. Recognizing the problem of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and other types of violence against young people and taking legal and non-legal measures for their prevention, effective law enforcement and for the prevention of multiple victimization; *(new paragraph)*

63. Ensuring full protection of young people from all forms of violence, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and promoting physical and psychological recovery and social and economic reintegration of the victim; *(new paragraph)*

64. Recognizing and supporting the role of family and informal groups such as non-governmental organizations and youth-related organizations as the best mechanisms to provide a holistic environment for a healthy life through the provision of knowledge, information, skills and motivation; *(new paragraph)*

65. Recognizing the problems faced by local and foreign workers, the majority of whom are youth who are often neglected and under-represented and faced with all forms of exploitation, and ensuring the provision of appropriate and adequate health care services. *(new paragraph)*

Substance Abuse *(paras. 36 to 38 of the draft Lisbon Declaration)*

66. Reducing the devastating consequences of drug abuse through demand reduction policies that aim at preventing the use of drugs and at reducing the negative health and social consequences of drug abuse; *(para. 36, revised)*

67. Raising youths' awareness and decision-making skills regarding substance abuse and building healthier lifestyles, in conjunction with young people, parents, those responsible for taking care of young people and youth organizations; *(new paragraph)*

68. Giving particular attention to demand reduction notably by working with youth through formal and informal education, including peer education, information activities based on accurate and reliable information, other preventive measures such as access to recreational activities and by promoting youth-friendly and gender-equitable services and support for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of young drug abusers; *(para. 37, revised)*

69. Strengthening international, regional, sub-regional, and bilateral cooperation, and increasing efforts to fight against the illicit production, supply and trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. *(para. 38, revised)*

In connection with the Lisbon World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, we urge member and associate member governments of the ESCAP region to:

70. Be represented at the Lisbon World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth to ensure that the concerns of Asian and Pacific youth are given prominence;

71. Include young people in their national delegations so that the voices of youth may be heard;

72. Support the Asia-Pacific Position as a regional input for the Lisbon World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, in particular for incorporation in the Lisbon Declaration on Youth.

We agree to pursue international cooperation to promote the above commitments and through the following actions at the national, regional and international levels: *(paras. 39 to 45 of the draft Lisbon Declaration)*

National level:

73. Request UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, the World Bank, and other United Nations agencies, as well as ADB and the IPPF to give greater support to national youth policies and programmes within their country programmes; *(para. 39, revised)*

74. Request further the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to assist member states, on request, in undertaking periodic reviews as a means to up-date the national youth policy; *(para. 40, revised)*

75. Request the United Nations Resident Coordinator System to expand the use of the mechanism of the inter-agency theme group on youth, or to set up one, where there is none, for regular exchange of information on youth policies and programmes, and for the promotion of collaboration among in-country United Nations bodies in the field of youth; *(new paragraph)*

76. Invite United Nations Information Centres to intensify their commitment on and cooperative activities with Ministries responsible for youth and national youth and student organizations to strengthen the national youth policy and programme process. *(new paragraph)*

Regional level:

77. Request ESCAP to continue to organize, on a regular basis, regional intergovernmental meetings of senior officials responsible for youth;

78. Strengthen ESCAP's human resources development programme for youth, focusing on provision of assistance to governments and other stakeholders, including youth organizations, in their efforts to develop

national youth policies as well as provision of training for youth development personnel;

79. Urge ESCAP to ensure the participation of young people in all its programmes and activities for youth;

80. Request ESCAP to coordinate with regional offices of other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, and other intergovernmental bodies, in their formulation and implementation of programmes for youth;

81. Request ESCAP to provide support to national, subregional and regional alliances of youth organizations with a view to strengthening their solidarity and capacity through networking;

82. Request all concerned in regional offices of other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to set up a "Youth Desk".

International level:

83. Invite the United Nations Youth Unit, delegates of the International Preparatory Consultations and the first session of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth to consider the Asia-Pacific Position adopted by the Second Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on HRD for Youth (Bangkok, Thailand, 1-5 June 1998); *(new paragraph)*

84. Ensure the follow-up of the first session of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and encourage the holding of future sessions on a regular basis so as to better promote and monitor the implementations of the World Programme of Action for Youth at all levels; *(para. 44, revised)*

85. Invite the youth-related bodies and organizations of the United Nations system to participate in the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and the related youth minister conferences, and to coordinate their structures through convening annual sessions of the United Nations Inter-Agencies Meeting on youth to promote a concerted follow-up of the recommendations of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and of the WPAY at all levels; *(new paragraph)*

86. Request the World Youth Forum of the United Nations system (Braga, Portugal, 2-7 August 1998) to review and follow up on the recommendations of the Asia-Pacific Meeting of Youth Organizations convened by ESCAP, UNESCO/PROAP and RCCAP (Bangkok, Thailand, 27-29 May 1998) and to note the Asia-Pacific Position adopted by the Second Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on HRD for Youth (Bangkok, Thailand, 1-5 June 1998) so as to contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Action; *(new paragraph)*

87. Urge interested Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to increase their financial contribution to the United Nations Youth Fund and set-up an advisory body to this Fund, composed of representatives of both Ministers responsible for youth and youth NGOs to provide guidance on both fund-raising strategies

and project formulations, implementation and evaluation to follow-up the World Conference and World Youth Forum with specific youth projects; *(new paragraph)*

88. Urge the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations Youth Unit, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, within available resources, by increasing its regular staff and by appointing an inter-regional advisor on youth policies and programmes to provide advisory services to member states, on request, on ways and means to strengthen national youth policies and programmes; *(new paragraph)*

89. Further request the Secretary-General to set targets for the recruitment and career development of qualified young people on a geographically balanced manner and include youth as a specific agenda in the General Assembly's Working Group on the "Strengthening of the United Nations System". *(new paragraph)*